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**Informational Hearing:
Public Media**

November 12, 2025 - 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

KPBS Conrad Prebys Media Complex at Copley Center, San Diego State University
(SDSU)
San Diego, CA

Opening Remarks

Honorable Christopher M. Ward, Chair
Members of the Committee

**I. Overview: Public Media and impacts to entertainment, programming, and loss
of federal funding.**

Jennifer Ferro, President and CEO
KCRW (Los Angeles)

Andrew Russell, President and CEO
PBS Southern California

Matt Pearce, Director of Policy
Rebuild Local News

II. Public Media content production and Labor

Jack Speer, Broadcaster
SAG-AFTRA Member

Nathan Dappen, Filmmaker
Co-founder of Day's Edge Productions

III. Local impacts to communities and audience

Deanna Mackey, General Manager
KPBS (San Diego)

José Martínez-Saldaña, Co-Executive Director
Radio Bilingüe

Joe Moore, President and General Manager
KVPR (Fresno and Bakersfield - covering seven counties in the Central Valley)

Public Comments

Closing Remarks

Overview of Public Media

Public media refers to non-profit broadcast organizations defined in the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. The most nationally recognized examples are the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and their affiliated television stations, and National Public Radio (NPR) and their member organizations. However, unlike other public media systems around the globe, all local public media organizations are independently owned and operated, and opt into membership of national public media entities. Neither NPR or PBS own local stations or dictate their programming of services. These organizations are supported through a mix of federal and state funding, membership contributions, and donations. The main goal of public media is to inform, educate, and provide arts and cultural content, with the focus of serving children, rural communities, and areas traditionally underserved by commercial media.

Public media in California represents a relatively small, when compared to other national media and entertainment companies based in the state, but highly leveraged investment with outsized economic, educational, and cultural returns. California is home to 33 stations that formerly received grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. These stations range from rural public television and radio stations, community broadcasters who are unaffiliated with a national public broadcast network, dual licensees that are members of both NPR and PBS, university licensees associated with a university, Spanish language broadcasters, and music stations. This varied ecosystem of public interest broadcasters sustain thousands of jobs, provides trusted journalism, supports childhood education, and ensures diverse voices are represented in California's media ecosystem. According to data from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, these broadcasters provide more than 1,200 jobs in the state and account for \$150 million in direct labor income. At a time of rapid media consolidation and local news decline, public media remains one of the most reliable and equitable tools available for serving all Californians.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)

CPB was created by Congress, and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, as a means to distribute funds for local public radio and television stations. This non-profit corporation, established under the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, had the mission of ensuring universal access to high quality, non-commercial educational and cultural telecommunications services. Seventy-Five percent of CPB's funding was given directly to public media stations. Congress voted to rescind previously appropriated funds to CPB, ending federal funding for public media stations.

In more populated metropolitan areas, federal funding from CPB had a large impact even though it represented a smaller percentage of overall station budgets when compared to other revenue sources like private donations from listeners and viewers, and from other corporations and foundations. PBS SoCal, KQED, LAist, and KCRW, some of California's largest media organizations, have all laid off staffers in recent months. Meanwhile, in rural communities, the loss of CPB funding is, in many cases, existential. According to CPB data, about 45% of public

radio and television stations it provided grants to in 2023 were in rural areas. Nearly half of those rural stations relied on CPB funding for 25% or more of their revenue.¹

In addition to direct grants and funding for local public radio and television stations, the CPB budget was used for television programming grants and national radio production and acquisition. CPB was prohibited from producing, scheduling, or distributing programming, as well as from owning and operating stations. NPR and PBS stations are typically owned and operated by state government agencies, public schools districts, private non-profit corporations, or by colleges and universities.

Public media stations participate in the Emergency Alert System. For example, KCBX, an NPR member in San Luis Obispo, is an LP-2 station. In emergency alerting systems, there are LP-1 stations, which are the primary station broadcasting emergency alerts to other areas radio station, and LP-2 stations, which provide redundancy for the LP-1 station. This redundancy is critically important to robust and reliable emergency alerting. KCBX is able to serve that role because of its extended broadcast range, onsite equipment, and long track record of staying on air even during weather and other emergencies. Prior to its defunding, CPB was the sole eligible recipient of funding through the Next Generation Warning System Grant Program within the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.² The purpose of this program was to enhance the infrastructure and technology needed to boost the capacity of local broadcasting systems to receive, redistribute, and broadcast emergency alert messages.

The Current Status of CPB

On May 1, 2025, President Donald Trump signed an executive order that ended CPB's federal funding for NPR and PBS. Both NPR and PBS have challenged the legality of that order. Even before the executive order, CPB had filed a lawsuit in March 2025 against the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for stopping its funding for the Next Generation Warning System Grant Program. CPB also filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration in April 2025, for attempting to remove three of the five members of CPB's board of directors. On June 2, 2025, President Trump requested a bill to rescind funding that was previously appropriated, which included funding for CPB. The \$1.1 billion cut to CPB's budget had been approved for distribution over the next two fiscal years, with an appropriation of \$535 million in the 2025 Fiscal Year.³ The bill passed and was signed into law on July 24, 2025. As of October 1, 2025, public media stations are no longer receiving federal funding.

Although the cost of funding public media was a stated reason for this rescission, it is important to put the \$1.1 billion budget into context. The funding for CPB is equivalent to \$1.60 per taxpayer per year, or 0.01% of the federal budget. A significant driver of the defunding of CPB were allegations by the current administration of liberal bias in media coverage by NPR and

¹ Pellish, A. (2025, June 12). 'Catastrophic': Rural public media stations brace for GOP cuts. Politico.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/12/pbs-npr-trump-cuts-00400433>

² <https://cpb.org/ngws>

³ Hubbard, K, and Yilek, C. (2025, June 12). House passes rescission package to claw back \$9.4 billion in funding for foreign aid, NPR, PBS. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/house-vote-rescission-claw-back-9-4-billion-foreign-aid-npr-pbs/>

PBS. These types of allegations are not new concepts, as in the 1990's socially conservative politicians began to voice concerns over the cultural direction of public media programming, and teamed with other fiscally conservative legislators to say that public media no longer needed federal support.

National Public Radio (NPR)

NPR is a public media organization with a main headquarters in Washington, D.C. and a western headquarters in Culver City, CA. It provides syndicated content and shows to more than 240 member stations, which operate more than 1,000 stations in all 50 states. NPR also elevates stories from its network during its flagship daily news magazines, *All Things Considered*, and *Morning Edition*, as well as during hourly news spots. Each of those stations are independently owned and operated, but do share content and resources. Whereas privately owned corporate radio generates funding through commercials, NPR broadcasts receive a portion of their funding through underwriting in the form of brief statements from major sponsors. The underwriting typically includes corporate slogans, descriptions of products and services, and direction to their websites. The organization is known for its thoughtful journalism, in-depth reporting, and commitment to giving voice to underrepresented communities.

NPR's programming covers a wide range of topics including national and international news, science, arts, and culture. Flagship shows such as *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* reach millions of listeners daily. Newer programs and podcasts, such as *Up First*, *Code Switch*, and *Planet Money*, have extended NPR's reach to digital audiences. Its editorial standards emphasize accuracy, fairness, and transparency, distinguishing NPR from partisan or commercial-driven media outlets.

There are 15 NPR members in California, including stations in large metro areas like KQED in San Francisco, LAist based in Pasadena, and KCRW in Santa Monica, as well as stations based in small and mid-sized California towns like KZXY in Philo and KVPR in Fresno. Stations provide local news, as well as music and cultural programming. Additionally, there are community broadcasters who are not affiliated with NPR, like *Radio Bilingue*, which broadcasts Spanish-language programming.

Public Broadcasting System (PBS)

PBS is a nonprofit television network that serves as the primary distributor of educational, cultural, and public affairs programming in the United States. Established in 1969, PBS was created to provide high-quality, non-commercial television that informs, educates, and inspires viewers. There are more than 330 local PBS stations across the United States.

PBS is widely recognized for its educational and documentary programming. Series such as *Sesame Street*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, *NOVA*, *Frontline*, and *PBS NewsHour* are examples of content produced by the network that promote learning, civic engagement, and cultural enrichment. Their children's educational shows in particular are created through trusted, research-based programs that promote literacy, math, and social-emotional development.

As one of the most trusted institutions in American media, PBS continues to uphold its mission of delivering content that educates, engages, and inspires. The network serves as a vital cultural and informational resource for communities across the nation.

Impact to rural areas

Rural towns and locations rely on public media stations for local news, education, government, public safety, and culture. During emergencies and natural disasters, these stations provide critical information across broadcast and digital platforms through their news reporting, as well as being part of federal, state, and local emergency warning systems. Whereas larger commercial television stations are most likely to cover mainstream entertainment, many traditional media sources have greatly reduced their arts and culture reporters. Local public news and radio are critical for promoting the creative economy and new works by artists and musicians.

Public stations in rural areas face unique challenges, in addition to the financial obstacles from fewer opportunities to raise donor support. There are extensive infrastructure costs related to reaching rural and remote audiences, and they often face gaps in broadband coverage that can prevent households from accessing digital content.

A rural station or Rural Audience Service Station (RASS) is defined by CPB as a public radio station with a coverage area population (CAP) density equal to or fewer than 40 people per square kilometer. Of the 393 public radio grantees for CPB in 2022, 163 were classified as rural radio stations. However, many station operators located in urban areas, that do not qualify as a rural station, serve rural Americans through stations or repeaters in rural communities. Public radio stations are licensed to universities, community non-profit organizations, Native American tribes or tribal authorities, and state or local authorities. However, most rural stations are licensed to state universities and community non-profits.⁴

Public media supporters are stepping up

The Public Media Company (PMC) is a non-profit organization that since 2001 has partnered with nearly 400 nonprofit and noncommercial media organizations in all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, to assist them with amplifying their services and impact, deepen community connections, and secure long-term business sustainability. They provide expert guidance, business resources, and connections to help local media organizations serve the needs of their communities, regardless of their size, location, or wealth.⁵

After the defunding of CPB, recognizing that as many as 115 public television and radio stations across the country were projected to close, causing tens of millions of Americans to lose access to free, high quality news, educational, and cultural programming, PMC responded by launching the Public Media Bridge Fund. The Fund's purpose is to secure local public media service at this vulnerable moment, with an early focus on rural and underserved communities where public

⁴ Connecting America: The Essential Service of Rural Public Radio. October 2022. Alliance of Rural Public Radio. <https://ruralpublic.org/policy-and-research/report/>

⁵ <https://publicmedia.co/>

media organizations face the greatest risks.⁶ As of August 2025, organizations such as the Knight Foundations, the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Schmidt Family Foundation, Pivotal Ventures, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have committed nearly \$27 million for the effort.⁷

The Bridge Fund is not intended to replace CPB funding. When it was announced, the Bridge Fund committed about \$35million to offsetting the worst outcomes of federal rescission of public media funding.⁸ It is a temporary bridge designed to preserve local service and provide time and support for stations to identify longer-term solutions. The first round of funding targets stations for whom CPB support made up 30% or more of their revenue in the 2025 fiscal year. These payments are projected for distribution in November and December of 2025.

Could California step in to fund public media?

California public media stations began working together shortly after the rescissions bill passed Congress in July. There may be a role for the state to support stations as they work to continue providing the services Californians have come to rely on.

There is a precedent in California for state-support of local media. The California Public Broadcasting Commission (CPBC) was a state agency created in 1975 to promote and develop public broadcasting in California by awarding grants for equipment, programming, and interconnection services. It was essentially dissolved and its functions were absorbed by other state entities in 1983, when Governor George Deukmejian cut the CPBC from the state budget and shutdown the cash flow to most public stations.⁹ Many of the codes sections for the Public Broadcasting Act of 1975 (California Government Code Sections 8800-8846) have been untouched since 1983, with the exception of Article 6, which added the Emergency Broadcasting Grant Program.

The powers and duties of the CPBC included the development and support of statewide policies to encourage the orderly growth and development of public broadcasting services responsive to the informational, cultural, and educational needs of the people of California. The Commission was also able to make grants to public broadcasting stations in order to aid in the improvement of broadcast operations, programming and capital facilities and equipment.

California may have other administrative tools to deliver support to public broadcasters. Any future plans to allocate public dollars to public media should consider California station feedback and prioritize mechanisms that will effectively and efficiently distribute funds.

⁶ <https://publicmedia.co/bridge-fund/>

⁷ Mullin, B. (2025, August 19). The race to rescue PBS and NPR Stations. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/19/business/the-race-to-rescue-pbs-and-npr-stations.html>

⁸ Press Release (2025, August 19). Foundations commit \$36.5 million to protect public media in communities. MacArthur Foundation. <https://www.macfound.org/press/press-releases/foundations-commit-36-million-to-protect-public-media-in-communities>

⁹ McDougal, D. (1986, January 18). Station's 'on the Air'--but Just Barely : Minority-Owned KPOO-FM Feels State, Federal Budget Pinch. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1986-01-18-me-984-story.html>

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Panelist Biographies

Jennifer Ferro, President and CEO – KCRW (Los Angeles)

As CEO of KCRW, Jennifer Ferro has worked to transform the institution from Southern California's flagship public radio station to a worldwide community that connects through the discovery of music, news and culture - in person, online and on the air.

Under her leadership KCRW completed a \$50 million capital campaign and moved into its first-ever, stand alone, state-of-the-art facility, allowing KCRW to become a true community institution.

KCRW's presence includes podcasts, original content features, live streams, a vibrant social networking community and an engaging mobile app. KCRW's live events programming has grown to reach over 250,000 people each year.

Ms. Ferro serves as the Chair of the NPR Board. She is a Senior Fellow for the Luskin School of Public Policy at UCLA. She is on the board of Marfa Public Radio, one of the most innovative public stations in the country that serves rural west Texas. She is also a board member of the prestigious Trusteeship/International Women's Forum, Southern California and is co-chair of the membership committee. Ms. Ferro was awarded the UCLA Award for public service and selected as one of the 500 Most Influential People in LA by the LA Business Journal.

Ms. Ferro earned her Bachelor's degree from UCLA. She spent years as a youth soccer coach and co-founder of the Women's Coach Initiative to get more women youth soccer coaches on the field. She is also an active mentor to graduate and undergraduate students at UCLA.

Andrew Russell, President and CEO – PBS Southern California

Andy Russell has over 30 years of public broadcasting experience at the highest levels, having held executive leadership positions at PBS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and serving as Board Chair of America's Public Television Stations. Andy joined PBS SoCal in 2013 and led its efforts to build PBS SoCal into its role as the flagship PBS station for Greater Los Angeles and Southern California. In 2018, PBS SoCal merged with KCET to bring together seven broadcast channels, streaming/digital, local production, education, and community partnership teams that now serve more than 21 million people living in the Southern California region.

Since the merger, PBS SoCal has become a significant producer of award-winning, original programs for multiple platforms and national distribution. This year, PBS SoCal won the most Emmys in the Los Angeles region for the 9th year in a row (competing with commercial and non-commercial broadcasters), an unprecedented achievement in the Television Academy's awards 77-year history.

A California native, Andy holds an MBA from Stanford University, an MPA from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, and is a graduate of the University of California, Davis. He's worked in the strategic planning practices in the Communications, High

Technology and Media industry groups at Accenture and PWC. He now serves on the Board of the Major Market Group of the nation's leading public television stations, the Board of California Public Television (as Chair), and is a Member of the CEO Roundtable at UC Irvine.

Matt Pearce, Director of Policy – Rebuild Local News

Matt Pearce is the Director of Policy for Rebuild Local News, where he oversees the development and analysis of First Amendment-friendly public policies to support quality community news and information. He lives in Los Angeles and once donated his old Toyota Prius to KCRW.

Rebuild Local News is the leading nonpartisan, nonprofit coalition developing and advancing effective public policies designed to strengthen community news and information. This broad-based organization brings together the largest alliance of local publishers, labor unions, civic organizations and newsrooms representing both rural and urban communities. Together, these 50 organizations represent over 3,000 newsrooms and 15,000 journalists working together to revive local news.

Pearce is a former staff writer for the Los Angeles Times, where he covered national news, politics and culture from 2012 to 2024, including stories about the rebranding of KPCC to LAist and the death of longtime KCRW executive Ruth Seymour. Pearce contributed to the Times' 2023 Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of racist comments by Los Angeles city officials.

Pearce was the president and a co-founding officer of Media Guild of the West, a local union of The NewsGuild-CWA that represents hundreds of journalists and news workers in print and digital newsrooms across Southern California, Arizona and Texas. In that role, he helped shape public policy efforts to secure more than \$125 million in pledged investments for California journalism, including the 2022 push that led to the creation of the UC Berkeley California Local News Fellowship.

Pearce holds a master's degree from the University of Missouri. In 2024, he received the Sí Se Puede Award from the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the President's Award from the Society of Professional Journalists for his press freedom advocacy.

Jack Speer, Broadcaster – SAG-AFTRA Member

Jack Speer is a recently retired NPR newscaster and a former correspondent in Washington, D.C. Over his career Speer covered some of the major stories of the past four decades, either as a reporter in the field or as an anchor in the broadcast booth.

Prior to joining the Newscast Unit in 2007, Speer was a correspondent with NPR's Business Desk. For nearly a decade he covered the nation's top business and economic news. Speer was part of a team that covered the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. As a business correspondent he also traveled the country doing a wide range of stories, including a one on one interviews with

CEO's, day in the life of one of the last door-to-door Fuller Brush salesmen and a profile of North America's oldest brewery.

Before coming to NPR in 1998, Speer anchored the Washington Business Journal reports on WUSA-TV Channel 9 in Washington, D.C. Over his career he has worked at radio and television stations in Washington, Cleveland and Trenton, N.J.

Speer has been honored with a number of industry awards for his work including: American Universities 14th Annual Journalism Award for Excellence in Personal Finance Reporting, the Best Editorial Commentary award from the Washington Journalism Society and the Best Newscaster award from the New Jersey Associated Press.

In addition to his broadcast work, Speer has been a member of SAG-AFTRA since 1988, currently serving on the unions National Board, Local Board on the Finance Committee.

Currently, an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University's Carey School of Business Jack's expertise includes crisis communications and media convergence. Speer has also interviewed major thought leaders for programs at the Smithsonian Institution.

Jack has a BA in Communications from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and an MA in Journalism from the University of Maryland. He and his wife Colleen Allen have two children and live in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Nathan Dappen, Filmmaker – Co-founder of Day's Edge Productions

Dr. Nate Dappen is a biologist-turned-filmmaker and the co-founder of Day's Edge Productions, a San Diego-based company specializing in science documentaries. With a Ph.D. in evolutionary biology from the University of Miami, Dr. Dappen has spent the last 15 years using the power of storytelling to bridge science, culture, and public understanding.

As co-creator and director of the Emmy-nominated PBS primetime science series Human Footprint - now in its second season - Dr. Dappen has helped shape one of public television's most innovative explorations of how human behavior transforms the planet - inspiring audiences nationwide to consider their relationship with the natural world around them. Developed in partnership with National PBS the series blends immersive visuals, character-driven storytelling, and rigorous science to bring urgent environmental and social issues into American homes.

Dr. Dappen also directed San Diego: America's Wildest City, a PBS Nature hour celebrating Southern California's vibrant wildlife and wild spaces. Produced by Day's Edge and broadcast nationally in spring 2024, the film continues to reach new audiences at home: it now screens twice daily on the Giant Screen Theater at the San Diego Natural History Museum, where it inspires thousands of local students, families, and visitors each month. The project exemplifies how public media content can live beyond the airwaves, becoming a permanent educational and cultural asset to the region.

Through Day's Edge, Dr. Dappen has led numerous productions that not only inform, but inspire civic dialogue and scientific literacy. Many of these films have been created in California, by California-based crews, and distributed nationwide, representing the very best of what public media can do when it is supported, funded, and grounded in the communities it serves.

In an era of declining federal support for public broadcasting and increasing consolidation in the media landscape, Dr. Dappen's work stands as a powerful reminder: public media isn't just content...it's infrastructure for an informed and resilient society. As local news deserts expand and commercial platforms retreat from science and education, it is productions like Human Footprint, San Diego: America's Wildest City, and PBS's long-running science and nature threads (NOVA and NATURE) that fill the gap. The economic and cultural value they bring to regions like Southern California, and to the country as a whole, cannot be overstated.

Dr. Dappen will speak to the challenges and opportunities of producing mission-driven media in today's funding climate, the importance of long-term investment in editorial independence and creative labor, and the critical role public television plays in telling stories that matter - not just to audiences, but to our democracy.

Deanna Mackey, General Manager – KPBS (San Diego)

Deanna Martin Mackey is the general manager of KPBS, serving as the organization's chief executive officer since June 2022. Mackey has been committed to equity for women and girls, particularly women of color, throughout her more than 30-year career in nonprofit management and executive leadership in media.

Before joining KPBS as general manager, she served as president of the Public Television Major Market Group (PTMMG), a consortium of the 40 largest PBS member stations in the U.S.

Previously, Mackey worked for 25 years at KPBS, serving as COO in her final six years at the station. She is credited with creating KPBS' original digital strategy and department, developing the industry's first converged newsroom and creating the community engagement program, One Book, One San Diego.

In 2015, Mackey co-founded Public Media Women in Leadership, to provide mentorship/training for women in her industry and address issues of gender inequity in public media. She serves as board chair of the organization.

She is chair of the board of directors of Parks, California and a board member of the Contributor Development Partnership and the Station Resource Group. For 13 years, she served as a Girl Scout troop leader.

Mackey was named a 2025 Women of Dedication Honoree by the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary, a Class of 2023 "Cool Woman" by Girl Scouts San Diego, a Latino Leader of

Influence by the San Diego Business Journal/San Diego Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and a Women in Leadership Awardee by the San Diego East County Chamber. She has also received the Hera Heroine Leadership Award from Hera Hub, Outstanding Alumnus honor from SDSU's Daily Aztec newspaper, named a YWCA Tribute to Women & Industry honoree for her work mentoring women at KPBS and the Girl Scouts, and was named one of five "Women who Move the City" by San Diego Magazine.

José Martínez-Saldaña, Co-Executive Director – Radio Bilingüe

A social-justice minded transformational leader, mentor and coach, Martínez-Saldaña is grounded in community-centered collaboration and service. He brings decades of experience directing educational and student empowerment programs for community colleges and universities in California and five years leading an association to grow small businesses in a former redevelopment zone in Salinas, CA.

Prior to joining Radio Bilingüe, Martínez-Saldaña served as Deputy Director of Operations at Youth Alliance in Hollister, California — located in the state's Central Coast Region, a major Radio Bilingüe service area. At Youth Alliance, José provided leadership in finance, human resources, IT and Youth Impact Centers. From 2010-15, he was executive director of the Salinas United Business Association, where he focused on securing long-term sustainability for small business in a former redevelopment zone committed to revitalizing the community.

Born in Michoacán, Mexico, Martínez-Saldaña immigrated at age 8 to East San Jose, CA, where he was raised in a farmworking family. His lifelong interest in media and technology for community empowerment began in high school as his school's radio station announcer. He is also an aficionado of Latino traditional and contemporary music, DJ-ing for events, such as quinceañeras and community celebrations.

A graduate of Santa Clara University's Political Science program, José's education also includes a Masters in Higher Education Leadership from American Intercontinental University and an Ed.D (ABD) in Organizational Leadership from the University of La Verne.

Joe Moore, President and General Manager – KVPR (Fresno and Bakersfield)

Joe Moore is the President and General Manager of KVPR / Valley Public Radio in Fresno and Bakersfield. Since becoming President and General Manager in 2018, he has led the station through a shift to an all-news format, the COVID-19 pandemic, and innovative partnerships with other non-profit newsrooms.

Under his leadership, KVPR was named California Non-Profit of the Year by Senator Melissa Hurtado (2019), and won the National Edward R. Murrow Award in both 2022 and 2024. From 2010 through 2018 he served as the station's Director of Program Content. In that role, he

launched the station's local news department, and led the design-build process for the station's new broadcast center.

He is a Fresno native and a graduate of California State University, Fresno. He lives in Fresno with his wife and two young children.

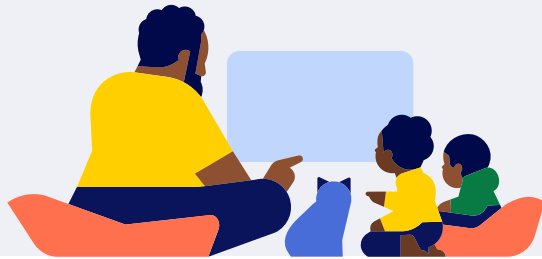
For 22 years,
PBS is #1 in public trust.



of Americans say
 it is important
 for the country to
 have a strong public
 television system.

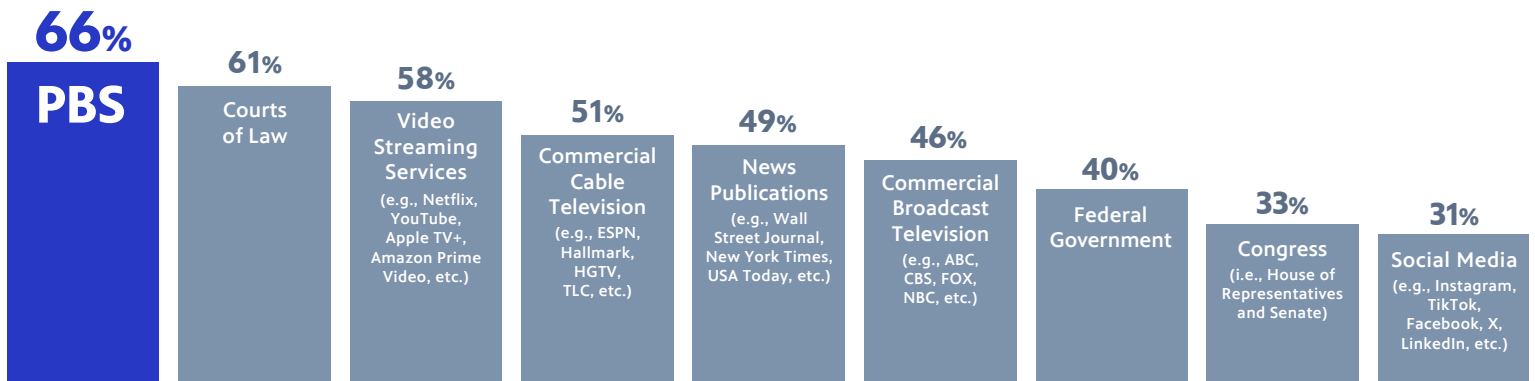


of Americans say
 PBS has an important
 role in providing
 emergency alerts
 to the public.



PBS is the
most trusted
 news and public
 affairs network.

Americans say
PBS is the most trusted institution.

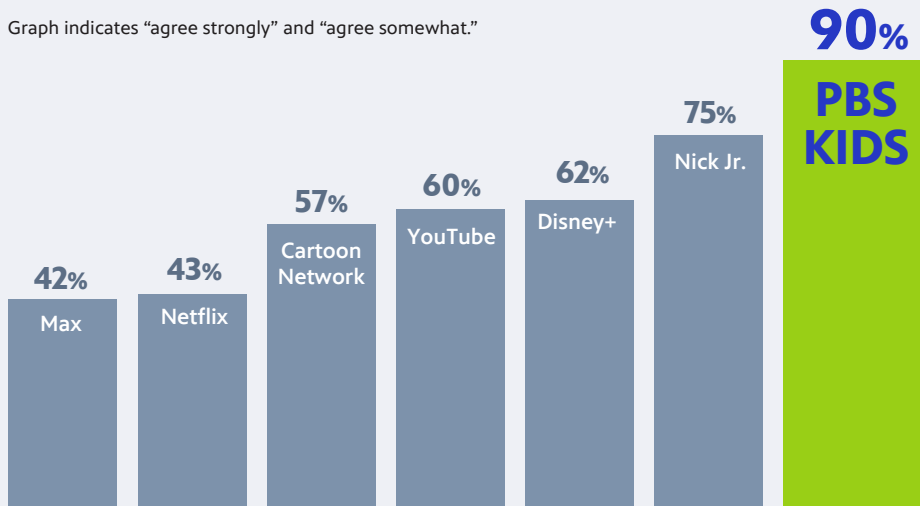


76% agree
 PBS stations provide an
excellent value
 to communities.



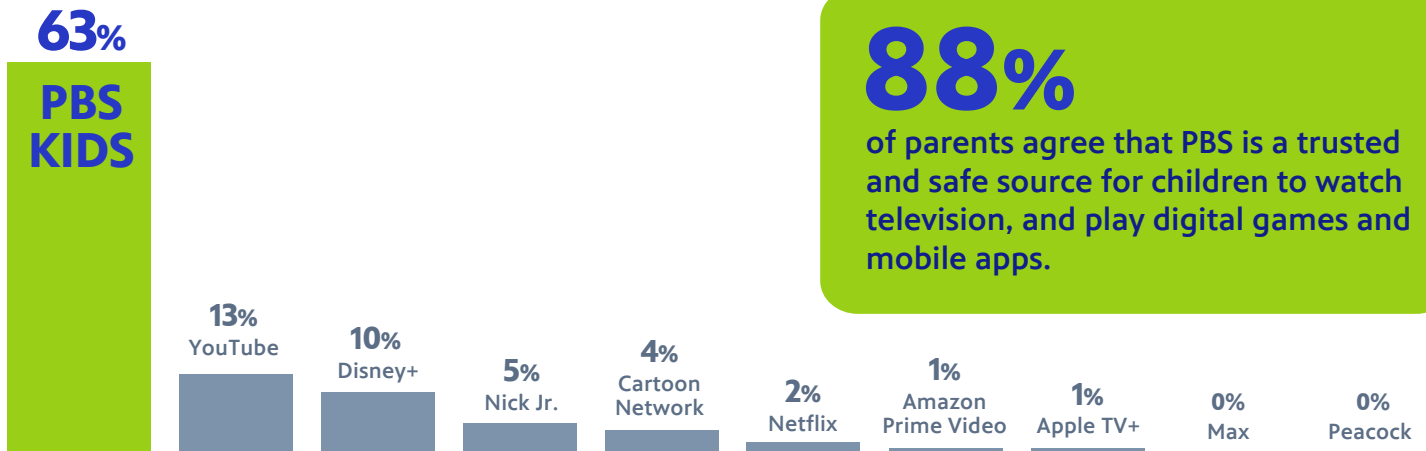
Parents say PBS KIDS helps prepare children for success in school.

Graph indicates “agree strongly” and “agree somewhat.”



PBS KIDS named most educational media brand.

Graph indicates “most educational.”



88%

of parents agree that PBS is a trusted and safe source for children to watch television, and play digital games and mobile apps.

PBS stations reach more children in low-income homes than any of the children’s cable TV networks in one year.

(Source: Nielsen NPOWER, L+7, 9/25/23 - 9/29/24, M-Su 6A-6A Reach (000), PBS stations, select children’s cable networks, K 2-11, H Inc<\$40K, 50% unif., 1+ min.)

PBS KIDS averages 16 million monthly users and over 350 million monthly streams across digital platforms.

(Source: Google Analytics, Jan - Dec 2024, pbskids.org, PBS KIDS mobile, CTV, and games app.)





U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE & TRANSPORTATION

JUNE 2025: PUBLIC BROADCASTING SNAPSHOT

NPR and PBS Are More Than “Tiny Desk” and “Daniel Tiger” They Are Critical to Public Safety

Public broadcasting serves a critical role in disseminating local, state, and national emergency alerts and keeping Americans informed about lifesaving news. Local National Public Radio (NPR) and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) member stations rely on federal funding to supplement private donations. By threatening funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) with his [rescission request](#) seeking to claw back nearly \$1.1 billion in support for public broadcasting, the President is risking the ability of these local broadcasters to deliver critical information during emergencies.

Key Findings:

- The operations of 79 public radio and 33 TV stations across 34 states and territories are considered vulnerable to federal funding cuts.
- Nearly 13 million Americans live in communities under threat of losing their local public broadcast stations. What’s worse, these stations serve large swaths of the Western, Midwestern, and Southeastern United States at risk of wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other public safety emergencies. This double threat casts uncertainty on the ability of these stations to disseminate emergency alerts and information to residents when they need it most.
- More than 70 percent of federal funding goes directly to local public broadcasters for content, interconnection, and support services. It would cost local public broadcasters more than double CPB’s current contribution to replace these critical services through alternative public or private means.

Why NPR and PBS Are Essential in Emergencies:

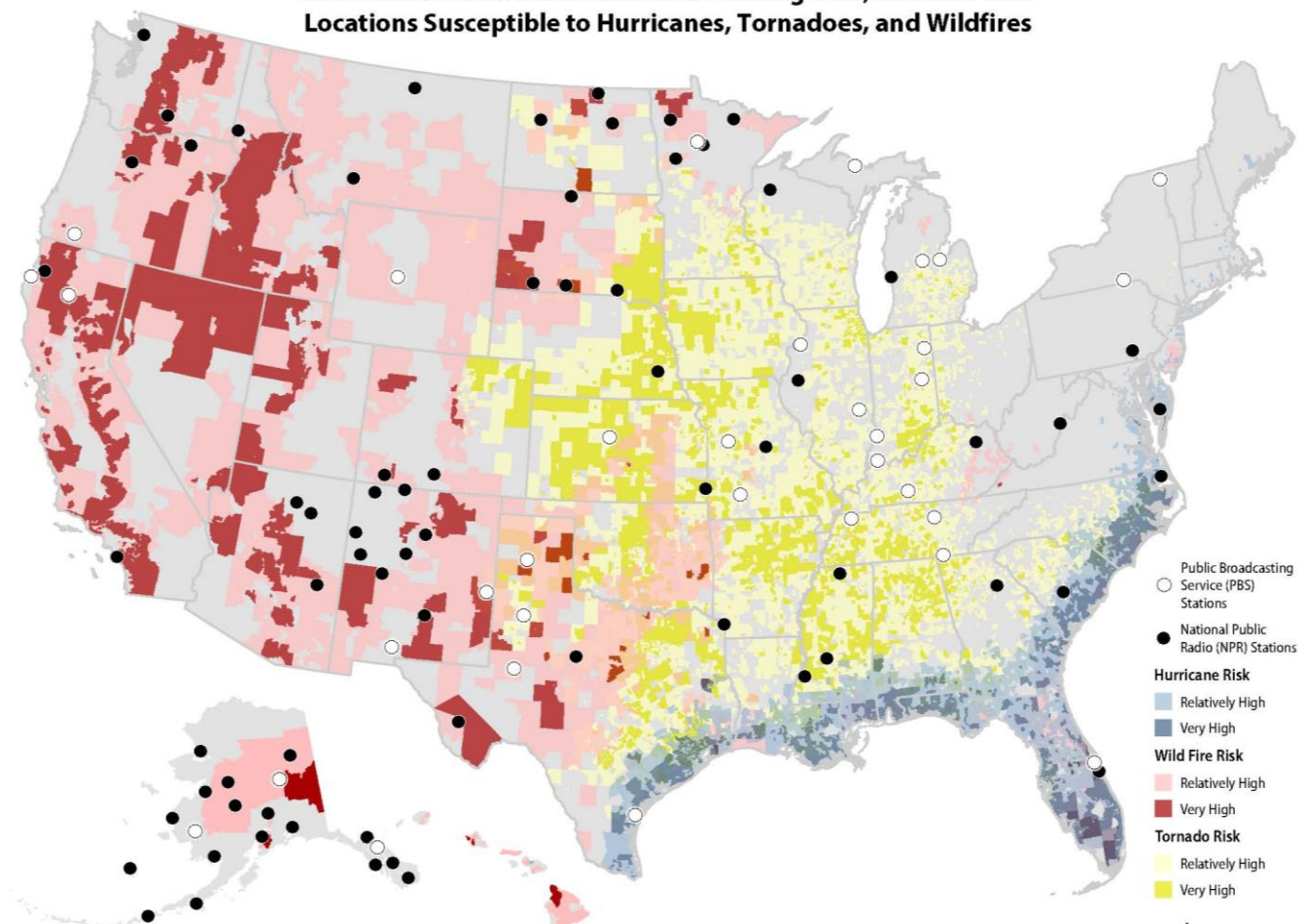
Public radio and TV stations play essential public safety roles that cannot be replaced by commercial alternatives. At least 20 States name public broadcasters as a resource in their emergency plans, and many serve as emergency operations centers.ⁱ NPR also provides member stations with resources such as backup transmitter kits and portable studio systems that can be used by stations if on-air operations are disrupted by natural disasters or other emergencies.ⁱⁱ Given the role they play in emergencies, there is no commercial alternative that can comprehensively replace public broadcasters.

IMPACT ON RURAL AMERICANS

Support through CPB is critical for many local stations, with the most vulnerable in rural and remote communities. Public radio and television stations serve as the primary—often sole—source of local news, educational content, and emergency alerts. These stations rely heavily on federal funding, with some depending on it for over 70 percent of their budgets. **Some rural areas depend on their local public media station as their only source of information in emergencies.**

In severe storm and wildfire situations that knock out a community's power supply, TVs broadcasting news on the path of an incoming tornado may go dark due to power outages, and cell phones may lose service, leaving families with only local public radio broadcasts delivered to battery-powered, hand-crank, or car radios. Without local broadcasting, families in rural areas may not receive critical alerts in time to get to safety.ⁱⁱⁱ

PBS and NPR Stations at Risk from Funding Cuts, Overlaid with Locations Susceptible to Hurricanes, Tornadoes, and Wildfires



The PBS and NPR stations included on the map are stations that received more than 30% of their operating budget from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in the most recent fiscal year. The stations may be in areas susceptible to hazards beyond those depicted (e.g., earthquakes, floods, and snowstorms).



Source: FEMA, PBS, NPR

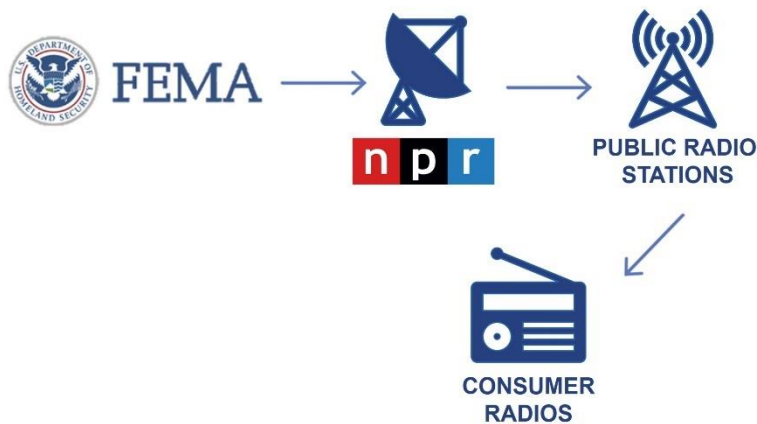
State	Extremely Vulnerable		Moderately Vulnerable		Vulnerable		Estimated Impacted Population
	Radio Stations	TV Stations	Radio Stations	TV Stations	Radio Stations	TV Stations	
Alaska	11	2	4		3	1	182,656
Arizona	3						459,358
California		2	2				116,313
Colorado	1				1		126,345
Florida	1	1					728,272
Georgia			1				524,079
Guam					1		153,836
Idaho	1						338,861
Illinois		1	1		1	1	414,505
Indiana		3			1	1	250,151
Kansas		1			1		351,670
Kentucky				1	1		385,501
Maryland					1		217,835
Michigan	1	1				2	14,145
Minnesota			2		2	1	770,377
Mississippi	2				1		491,672
Missouri			1	1		1	122,137
Montana	1				1		738,786
Nebraska					1		149,678
New Mexico	3		1	1	6	1	571,685
New York						2	49,154
North Carolina	1						514,719
North Dakota	1				2		384,456
Oregon	2			1			426,346
Pennsylvania					1		141,752
Puerto Rico					1		1,059,771
South Dakota	2		2				472,744
South Carolina	1						635,366
Tennessee		1		2			226,766
Texas		3		1	4		964,872
Washington			1		1		69,027
West Virginia	2						579,667
Wisconsin			1				232,866
Wyoming						1	10,682
Total	32	15	17	7	30	11	12,876,050

Percent of station funded by CPB grants			
	Extremely Vulnerable	Moderately Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Radio	>50%	41-50%	30-40%
TV	>40%	35-40%	30-35%

HOW IT WORKS: PUBLIC SAFETY

Public radio and television stations play essential roles in sharing public safety information during emergencies.

PUBLIC RADIO SATELLITE SYSTEM

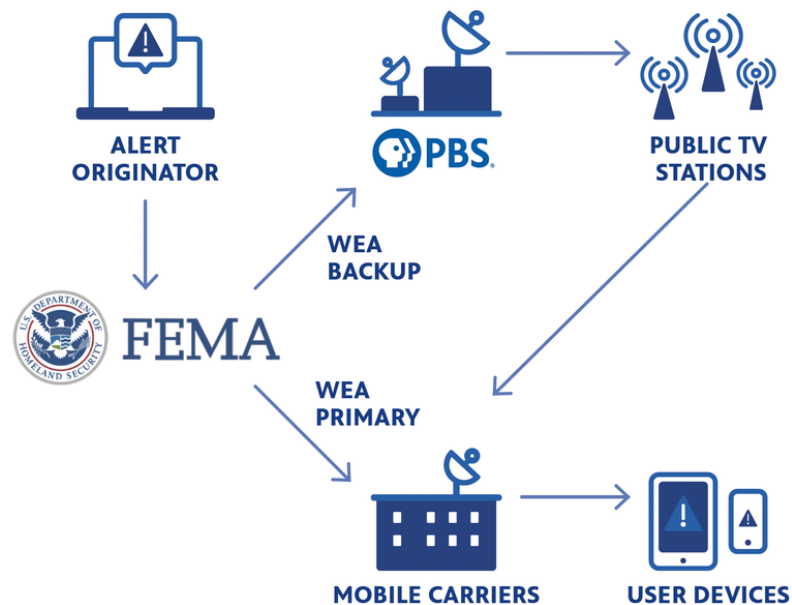


NPR manages^{iv} the Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS), which receives national Emergency Alert System (EAS) feeds directly from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This system provides important redundancy in the event of power, network, or internet outages. Without continued funding for public radio, federal, state, or local

governments would need to establish and fund a replacement emergency alerting system or risk alerts not reaching all residents.

PBS^v provides additional redundancy through its Warning, Alert, and Response Network (WARN), which partners with FEMA to enable stations to broadcast geotargeted emergency alerts to cellular devices. The WARN system relies on public television infrastructure to provide important redundancy in the event of a cybersecurity incident or if an internet disruption to a mobile carrier's facility

WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERT PATH



breaks its connection to FEMA.^{vi} **In 2024 alone, over 11,000 alerts were transmitted over the PBS WARN system, marking a 30% increase since the prior year.**

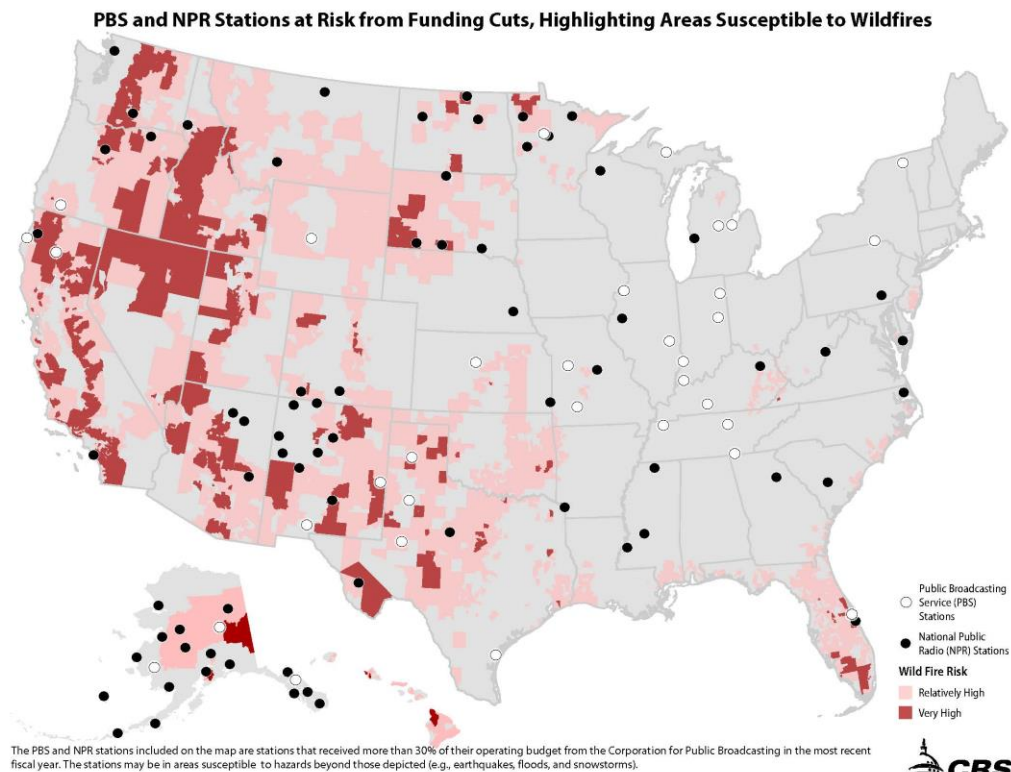
WILDFIRES

OKLAHOMA

In March 2025, public broadcasters played a critical role in responding to wildfires in Oklahoma. KOSU, along with its two satellite stations, KOSR and KOSN, collectively serve central and northeast Oklahoma, making them the primary emergency alerting distribution system for the northeast quadrant of the state. Between March 13 and 23, 2025, 65 fire alerts were issued across 13 counties utilizing public broadcasts. Additionally, six evacuation alerts were transmitted, further demonstrating the lifesaving services provided by public broadcasters.

KOSU is not compensated for this service except through the federal funding offered through CPB. KOSU operates this system as a community service on behalf of Oklahoma, at a cost of \$751,042 in Fiscal Year 2024—a \$175,067 grant from CPB and \$575,975 in private donations. While the percentage of federal funding is smaller than private donations, making up this gap would require significant support from alternative funding sources to continue providing critical emergency alerting services.

This year, FEMA has designated^{vii} much of the Western United States as “very high” wildfire risk; some of these areas, such as in Montana and South Dakota, are served by public broadcasters that are extremely dependent on federal funding.



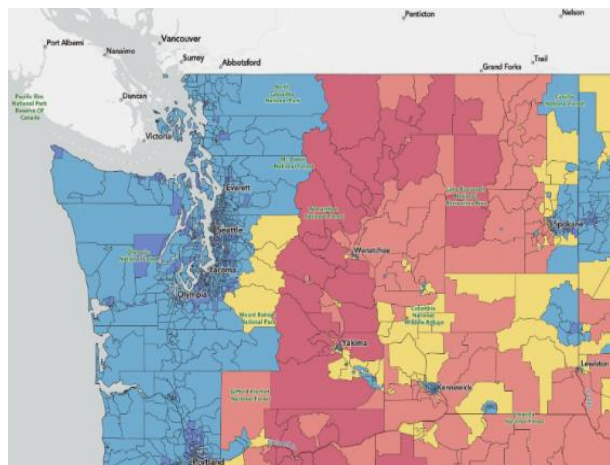
WILDFIRES CONT.

WASHINGTON

In the State of Washington, KDNA, which serves Granger and the surrounding area, is reliant on federal CPB grants for a significant portion of its operating budget. KDNA serves an area that is at a high risk of wildfires, including the city of Yakima, with a population of over 90,000. KDNA plays a critical role in responding to emergencies by providing local news and information. Without continued federal funding, KDNA and other public broadcasters will have to find alternative funding sources or risk being unable to provide their essential public safety services.



Source: CPB



Source: FEMA

“NWPB is committed to bringing critical fire coverage to audiences around the Northwest — online and on the air. The NWPB news team is staffed May through October 24/7 to track and report on fires that pose a risk to human lives, property and close major roadways. The team has increased the number of on-call staff to account for a larger number of fires that have already been started. Throughout the fire season, more in-depth coverage is a primary focus, as well, with topics like [wildfire communication gaps for Spanish-speaking Northwesterners](#) and how some groups are working to help ensure emergency alerts are translated properly for the safety of all in the region. This is of specific concern in [Skamania County region after unclear alerts were sent](#) and NWPB has continued to follow up with progress on the issue.”

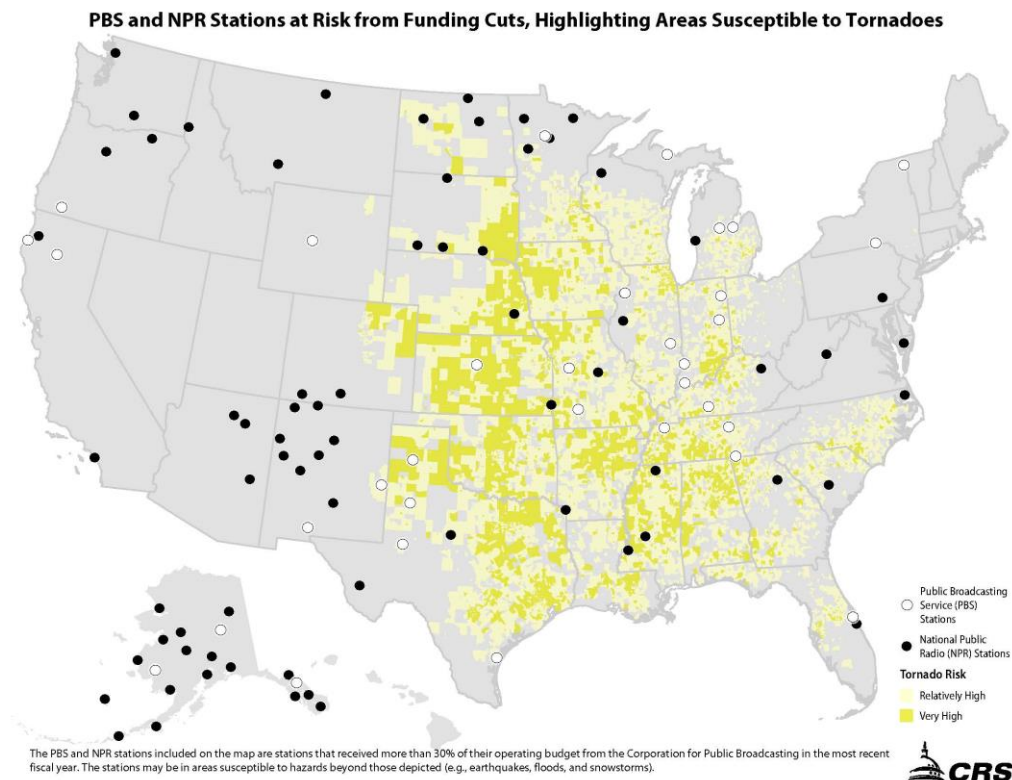
~Northwest Public Broadcasting

TORNADOES

KENTUCKY

An historic tornado in December 2021 ravaged western Kentucky, leaving devastation that communities are still recovering from today. This storm stands as one of the most catastrophic in U.S. history, carving a tornado track that ranks among the longest ever documented in the nation. During this emergency, WKMS, a public radio station operating in western Kentucky, was often the sole source of news and emergency information as communities suffered from widespread power and communication outages. Affected residents were able to utilize their emergency or car radios to receive critical information from WKMS, underscoring the lifesaving services provided by public broadcasters.

FEMA has identified much of the Midwest United States as at risk for tornadoes this year.^{viii} While tornadoes generally occur from March through August, they can strike at any time. Tornadoes have impacted every state, but most occur in “Tornado Alley,” a belt from Nebraska through Kansas, Oklahoma, and into central Texas.^{ix}



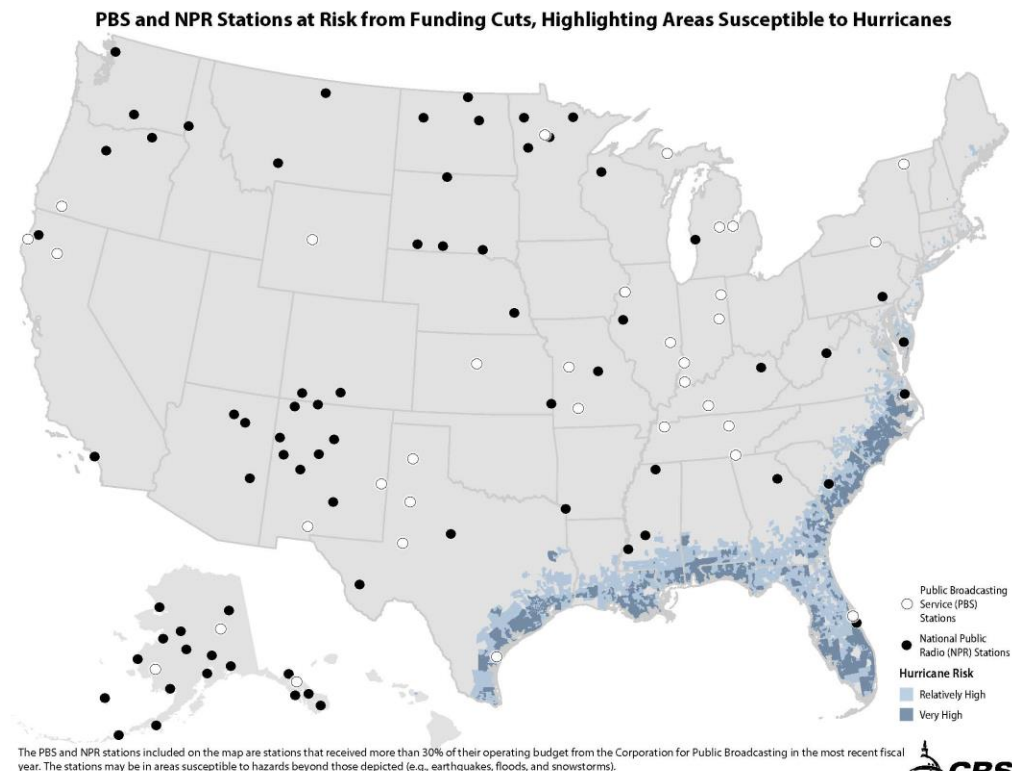
Source: FEMA, PBS, NPR

HURRICANES

NORTH CAROLINA

During the 2024 hurricane season, public broadcasting played a crucial role in disseminating emergency information and maintaining communications channels amid widespread disruptions. The devastation caused by Hurricane Helene left 500,000 people in the Southeastern United States without power and without reliable access to the internet and to cellular networks. In North Carolina, Blue Ridge Public Radio (BPR), a local NPR station, provided the most reliable information to the impacted areas, as other sources couldn't be accessed without power. The station provided live updates and emergency resources—invaluable services that alternative sources would be otherwise unable to share with impacted communities.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)^x, the 2025 hurricane season, which began June 1 and runs through November, has a 60% chance of being “above normal,” and FEMA^{xi} has designated much of the southeast coast as at “very high” risk of hurricanes. With an estimated 2 to 5 major hurricanes in 2025, the Trump Administration’s threats to public broadcasting are a clear threat to public safety.



BACKGROUND ON PUBLIC BROADCASTING

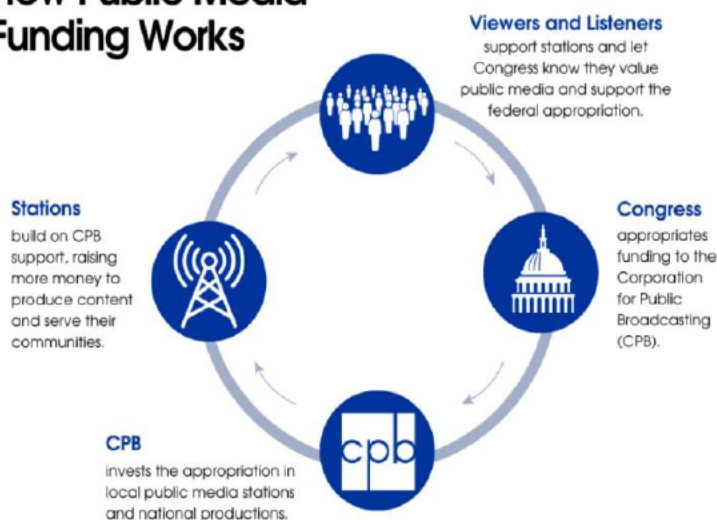
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is a private, nonprofit corporation authorized by Congress in the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. Congress has provided funding on a bipartisan basis for public broadcasting for more than 50 years. 95 percent of CPB's appropriation goes to content creation, community services, and other local needs, with the rest allocated to CPB's administrative costs. Through the Community Service Grants, CPB directly supports local National Public Radio (NPR) and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) member stations. Since 1975, CPB has had a unique, two-year advance appropriation designed to insulate local NPR and PBS stations from political interference and allow local stations and producers the time needed to properly plan, design, execute, and support programming and services. Without the certainty of a two-year appropriation, stations could not provide the same quality programming and services.^{xiii}

Line Item	Percent of Budget ^{xii}
Public TV Station Grants	50.1%
Public TV Programming Grants	16.7%
Public Radio Station Grants	20.7%
Public Radio Programming Grants	1.6%
System Support Funds	6%
CPB Operations	5%

Source: CPB

With over 70 percent of CPB's funding going directly to local stations, it is estimated that it would cost local public broadcasters more than double CPB's current contributions to replace the content, interconnection, and support services currently provided by CPB. Defunding public broadcasting would have a detrimental impact on rural communities across the United States, potentially forcing numerous rural stations off the air, leaving residents without critical information, especially during emergencies like natural disasters and extreme weather events.

How Public Media Funding Works



Source: CPB

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- ⁱ Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (n.d.). *Emergency alerts*. <https://cpb.org/emergency-alerts>
- ⁱⁱ PBS. (n.d.). *WARN contact information*. <https://www.pbs.org/about/about-pbs/contact-information/warn/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ NPR Distribution. (n.d.). *Support: Station emergency kits*.
<https://www.nprdistribution.org/support#station-emergency-kits>
- ^{iv} CNN. (2019, March 4). *Tornado safety tips: What you need to know*.
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/04/us/tornado-safety-tips-wxc>
- ^v Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (n.d.). *Emergency alerts*. <https://cpb.org/emergency-alerts>
- ^{vi} PBS. (n.d.). *WARN contact information*. <https://www.pbs.org/about/about-pbs/contact-information/warn/>
- ^{vii} WTCI PBS. (n.d.). *WARN*. <https://www.wtcity.org/warn/>
- ^{viii} Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). *Wildfire hazard*. National Risk Index.
<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/wildfire>
- ^{ix} Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). *Tornado hazard*. National Risk Index.
<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/tornado>
- ^x Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2020, August). *Tornado safety initiative: Fact sheet*.
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_tornado-safety-initiative_fact-sheet.pdf
- ^{xi} National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2024, May 23). *NOAA predicts above-normal 2025 Atlantic hurricane season*. <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-predicts-above-normal-2025-atlantic-hurricane-season>
- ^{xii} Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). *Hurricane hazard*. National Risk Index.
<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/hurricane>
- ^{xiii} Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (n.d.). *CPB appropriation*. <https://cpb.org/appropriation>
- ^{xiv} Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (n.d.). *Purpose of CPB appropriation*.
<https://cpb.org/appropriation/purpose>